

Homestead (Peter Marsh House)  
Henlopen Acres  
Rehoboth Beach  
Sussex County  
Delaware

HABS No. DEL-152

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3-REHOB  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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## HOMESTEAD (PETER MARSH HOUSE)

3-REHOB

Location: Henlopen Acres, Rehoboth Beach, Sussex County, Delaware.

Present Owner: W. S. Corkran

Brief Statement of Significance: This house, built in 1742, with a timber frame and unpainted, cypress shingles, is typical of early domestic architecture in Sussex County.

Reference: Dorothy and Richard Pratt, A Guide to Early American Homes--South (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), pages 54-55.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

In 1742, "Peter Marsh, yeoman" bought from "Richard Hinman, Gent." the tract of land called Young's Hope Patent, on Rehoboth Neck, to build upon it a house called in the old records "the Mansion House of the Plantation."

The Homestead is typical of early Sussex domestic architect ---- frame dwellings covered with the long bald-cypress shingles, unpainted and weathered to a silver grey.

The main block of the structure and low kitchen wing form the original house. The two-story wing is modern ---- added about thirty years ago to provide a new kitchen and servants' quarters, when the present owners rescued the place from an apparently ruinous state. In shingling the new service wing, old hand-driven cypress shingles, forty inches long, were obtained from a building of like age that had just been demolished.

Nearly two hundred years old at the time of its "rescue" thirty years ago, The Homestead was structurally sound. Of half timber construction with brick nogging,

HOMESTEAD (PETER MARCH HOUSE)  
Page 2HABS  
DEL  
3-REHOB  
1-

the sills, posts, studs and braces of black walnut, instead of the more usual oak, were as sound as the day they were set in place. Black walnut, it seems, does not harbour termites. The paneling and other woodwork is also of black walnut. However visionary he may have been in his dreams of pirate gold on the dunes, when it came to building, Peter Marsh was level-headed. He built exceedingly well.

In restoring the house, when the new service wing was added, the old kitchen in the low wing was made into a large office or sitting-room. Some previous owner had demolished the original generous fireplace and Dutch oven, and substituted a small inadequate opening and stove. This profanation the present owners replaced by an opening and chimney-piece of decent proportions. At the opposite end of the room they installed a partition, consisting of paneling and a round-headed door retrieved from the wrecking of an inn at Morristown, New Jersey, once frequented by General Washington and his officers in the Continental Army. Paneling and door harmonize with the other interior woodwork of The Homestead. It was a praiseworthy act to save them from the axe and crow-bar of the house-wrecker.

The partition thus introduced creates a hall from the house-door. One side of this little hall displays an inner section of the half-timber walls of the main block of the house ---- timbers, braces and brick nogging are visible, minus the clapboards and shingles that still cover the rest of the walls outdoors.

Prepared by Harold Donaldson Eberlein  
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